A Long-Term Survival Guide

My Large Knife-Based Survival Kit:

Personal survival kits are the smaller kits, which are designed to be carried with you at all times. A well-designed kit of this type can be a real lifesaver (ha ha) in a short-term survival situation. Unfortunately, I find most of these to be inadequate for long-term survival needs. This is because they are geared towards short-term, get you back to civilization scenarios, which is what most people are most likely to face, most of the time. I prefer to approach things from a "what if I can't go back to civilization ?" perspective, so here is my version of a personal kit, based on a Kabar Kukri (but any other large bolo or kukri knife would do), and a military surplus carrying case.

Components of long-term, knife-based personal survival kit.

The surplus case I used is made from canvas, and is marked "case, carrying 10549929". It is divided into two narrow compartments, front and back, and I have no idea what it was originally intended for. When fully packed, it measures 18 inches long, 4 and one-half inches wide, and 2 inches thick, and weighs approx. 5 lbs.

Contents: Kabar Kukri w/sheath, LED flashlight, military surplus field dressing, package of hacksaw blades, file in nylon sheath, space blanket sleeping bag in nylon case, 2 surplus nylon carrying straps, replacement 2-liter bladder for a hydration pack, and surplus nylon tent stake bag. There are also some small items which I packed into a long narrow plastic bag, which just fits in one half of the carrying case, including: 100 feet of thin nylon camo cord, several hundred feet of kite string, one package of 22 ga. green floral wire, a mini-ranger spearpoint knife with cord-wrapped handle, a small file in a nylon sheath, a fishing kit in a plastic match safe, a sewing kit in a plastic match safe, a cheap plastic poncho, a compass, a field surgical kit, a package with sutures, scalpel blades, scalpel handle, alcohol swabs, and foil pouches of betadine cream, a multi-tool in a nylon sheath, a black sharpie marker, a plastic Fresnel lens, a magnifying glass lens, a butane lighter, a magnesium firestarter, and a diamond sharpening stone. I also include a small vial of powered swimming pool chlorine with the hydration bladder, for water purification; both of these go in the tent stake bag, along with the packed carrying case.

Contents of plastic bag.

The plastic bag fits in one compartment of the carrying case, and the knife and other items go in the other side.

The LED flashlight goes in last, next to the knife, for easy access in the dark.

The carrying case fits in the tent stake bag, and then the hydration bladder slips in beside it.

Finally, the two nylon straps are attached to the tent stake bag, for backpack-style carrying.

When it is completely assembled, the kit is carried on the back like a pack, but it only weighs five pounds, so I am not tempted to leave it behind, like I might be with a heavy pack. One of the things I like about this system is that the completed kit is innocent-looking, and it does not look like you are carrying a big knife around. For packing my kits, I scrounge heavy plastic and mylar bags from work, and then cut them to the size I need and reseal them.

When a survival situation arises, the carrying case is removed from the tent stake bag, which then becomes a hydration pack. The Kabar is removed from the carrying case, and is carried on one side of my belt, and the case goes on the other side. The knife can also be left in the carrying case, if you want to keep it concealed.

The large chopping knife is your basic survival and construction tool. When combined with the other kit components and the how-to information from this long-term survival guide, it is possible to stay alive for an indefinite time period. You can use the kit tools to build shelters, construct traps and snares, make primitive hunting weapons, and fashion more tools from native materials, and any scrap metal you may come across. If I find myself without a firearm (or out of ammo), the ranger knife is used as a spearhead; a spear being one of the best defensive tools you can make. For instance, no other improvised weapon is as likely to kill a charging bear, as a properly-used spear. (Proper use means holding the spear pointing towards the charging animal, with the spear's butt planted in the ground, so that the animal will impale itself. Do not be tempted to throw your spear).

My goal in a long-term survival situation is to use this kit to survive, until I can reach my nearest buried cache.